

Students Help Local Entrepreneurs

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Jack and Jake's Local and Organic Market is a new business that plans to bring locally grown food to customers in underserved neighborhoods within three days of harvest, but to achieve that goal, the company first needs a top-notch distribution system. That's where a consulting team of MBA students from Tulane, Loyola and UNO comes in.



From left, MBA students Xavier Cabo, Ruth Yomtoubian, Ashton Prat and Jon Atkinson work at the Idea Village office to consult with a local entrepreneurial business during Entrepreneur Week. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

"They're helping us not just with the warehouse but with the overall distribution network as well," says John Burns, founder of Jack and Jake's. "They've done a couple of months worth of work in literally just a few days."

The Jack and Jake's project is part of New Orleans Entrepreneur Week, an annual event that wraps up today (March 26). Organized by the [Idea Village](#), it brings teams of MBA students from the nation's leading business schools to New Orleans to consult with local entrepreneurs.

"It's an invaluable experience in both directions," says Emily Mitchell, director of technical assistance at the Idea Village. "The entrepreneurs get an incredible amount of free consulting time from the best and the brightest, and the MBAs get to test their skills on real clients with real working challenges."

Five MBA students from the [A. B. Freeman School of Business](#) at Tulane teamed up with other university students to form two consulting groups. One team is working with Burns to optimize Jack and Jake's food distribution system while another is working to identify additional revenue streams for Sustainable Environmental Enterprises, which specializes in providing solar power for low- and moderate-income households.

"It's really nice to be able to bring students from all over New Orleans together to try to help a company that will do well for our community," says Chonchol Gupta, an MBA student who is part of the team working with Jack and Jake's.

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